CHIDAMBARAM): (a) the total exports of wood and wood products including wooden handicrafts during the last three years in value terms are as follows:

Value: In Rs. crores

1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
100.73	124.15	284.15

Source: Chemicals & Allied Products Export Promotion Council, Calcutta.

(b) The Government, Chemicals & Allied Products Export Promotion Council and Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts have been taking, on an on-going basis, several measures for the promotion of export of wood and wood products. These include besides Government's economic liberalisation measures, sponsoring sales-cum-study team to overseas countries, publicity campaign, participation in fairs and exhibitions abroad, availability of market development assistance etc.

Import and Export of Wheat

2039. SHRI RAM BAKHSH SINGH VERMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ordinary quality of wheat is being imported from foreign countries;

(b) whether inferior quality of wheat is being exported to foreign countries; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No wheat has been imported in 1994-95.

(b) and (c) Against a quantitative calling of 3 lakh MTs of Durum wheat and 5 lakh MTs of Non-Durum wheat fixed for the year 1994-95, 17,058 MTs of what (Durum & Non-Durum) valued at Rs 10.91 crores has been exported during the period April-December, 1994.

Decline in exports to European countries

2040. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether exports of several Indian items to Europe has fallen at the end of last year arid trade with European countries is in danger of declining as reported in the 'Pioneer' dated January 14, 1995;

(b) if so, what are the facts and details in this regard;

(c) what are the reasons for fall in exports to Europe;

(d) what is the quantum of annual exports and imports to and from Europe during 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 and so far in 1994-95; and

(e) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to boost trade with the European countries and what is the impact of these steps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) During the period April-December, 1994, the percentage growth in aggregate exports from India to Europe was 16.68% as compared to the corresponding period in 1993. The growth of aggregate exports includes marginal decline in exports of some items and increases in respect of others which is a normal feature.

(d) Quantum of annual exports to and imports from Europe from 1991-92 to December, 1994 are as under:

(Value in Rs. Crores)

	1991-92	*1992-93*	*1993-94*	*1994-95 (Apr.-Dec. 1994)*
Exports	18036.85	19300.95	21118.63	18850.62
Imports	17837.66	23087.23	26313.16	20131.93

(Source : DGCI&S, Calcutta)

(e) Bilateral economic relations are periodically reviewed with the European

Countries and Joint Commissions meetings are held periodically.

A new Indo-EU Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development has also come into force since August, 1994. In addition, a Cooperation Strategy has also been launched between India and the European Community for a period of five years recently.

In respect of East Europe, a pro-active customized strategy was adopted to adapt to the new situation with a view to boost trade by adopting measures like substitution of rupee payment trade by hard currency trade, counter trade direct business contacts at the grass-roots level, establishment of joint ventures, identification and development of more viable transport and transit routes, evolution of a more liberalised credit policy vis-a-vis CIS and building up the image of Indian goods through emphasis of. quality, launching of brand names, conducting publicity campaigns etc.

All these efforts are expected to further boost India's exports to Europe.

Extending V.A.B.A.L. to Engineering Sector

2041. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to extend the value-based advance licensing scheme to the engineering sector;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal;

(c) what will be the specific benefits of this proposal to the engineering sector;

(d) whether there is also a proposal to replace the existing International Price Reimbursement Scheme (IPRS) by an alternative scheme; and

(e) if so, what are the details of the scheme and in what way this scheme will be an improvement on the existing IPRS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (e) The Value based Advance Licensing Scheme is already available to the engineering sector. However following the withdrawal of IPRS for engineering products from 1.4.94, a new scheme called the Engineering Products Experts (Replenishment of Iron and Steel Intermediates) Scheme has been notified on the 1st March, 1995 for sourcing Iron and Steel intermediate inputs at near international prices from indigenous Steel producers for facilitating their exports. Under the Scheme, Iron and Steel intermediates can be sourced from any indigenous Steel producer after export of engineering products.

Demand, Supply and free import of edible oils

2042. SHRI ANANT RAM JAISWAL:
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present position regarding the deamand and supply of edible oils and whether Government have allowed free import of edible oils;

(b) if so, what are the names of firms' agencies-Public Sector Undertakings which have been given permission in this regard and on what basis togetherwith the details of quantity variety of imported edible oils and the estimated foreign exchange involved in such import;

(c) what will be the role of Government in respect of pricing and distribution in the deal of free import of edible oil and in what way the common people will benefit from the import; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Government are committed to import foodgrainsfood items in proportionate to a certain portion of their consumption according to GATT agreement?